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ABSTRACT

The pamphlet outlines the geographic, social, economic, and political status of Georgia in the 18th century and traces some of the events that led to the revolt against British rule. One of a series of materials about the American Revolution in Georgia, it is designed for junior or senior high school students. A brief teacher's guide is included. Prior to the Revolution, the colony comprised coastal lands of large plantations, small farms along the Savannah river, and unsettled land to the north and west. Savannah was the administrative and commercial center. Products included rice, indigo, deerskins, and lumber. Merchants and planters provided the colony's leadership while artisans, shopkeepers, and small farmers comprised the bulk of the white population. There was a large slave population. Beginning in 1763, efforts by Britain to raise revenue in the colonies initiated conflict between Britain and America. The Stamp Act, Sugar Act, and duties on imported goods prompted opposition to the colony's British governor, James Wright, and a boycott of British goods. During the next decade the colony's government branches disagreed over other issues, including voting rights. As other colonies to the north began to revolt against Britain, the Whig party in Georgia gained power and, in 1775, took control of local government. Georgia's signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776 locked her into the Revolution. The teacher's guide presents ideas for informal activities to enhance understanding of the text. (Author/AV)

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Revolutionary Background 1763·1775

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Editors' Note:

One of the early concerns of the Georgia Commission for the National Bicentennial Celebration was the lack of material on Revolutionary Georgia available for use in the state's public schools during the bicentennial years. As a result, one of the first projects of the Commission was the preparation of a series of pamphlets on the American Revolution in Georgia aimed specifically at public school use. With the cooperation of the Georgia Department of Education, this project has become a reality. Thirteen pamphlets are scheduled to be published between 1974 and 1978.

Our purpose in publishing these pamphlets is to present a clear, concise picture of Georgia's history during these important days. We hope that our efforts will encourage students' interest and add to their knowledge of Georgia's activities during the American Revolution.

Kenneth Coleman
Milton Ready

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The Georgia Bicentennial of 1976 commemorates the two hundredth anniversary of the American Revolution in Georgia. This revolution resulted in the independence of Georgia and twelve other British colonies along the Atlantic coast of North America. These colonies had been under British political control up to that time. The Georgia Bicentennial, then, celebrates the political birth of the State of Georgia and the United States. The anniversary of such an important event is usually accompanied by a variety of efforts to study the event and the men who helped guide and develop it. This pamphlet is one such effort to help you learn more about this Revolution and the origins of Georgia.

Is it fair to ask the question, "Why study or even bother with events which happened so long ago"? To answer that, it can be said that many people read and study American history simply because they enjoy knowing about the past. These people will be studying the Revolution in Georgia during the bicentennial and will find many rewarding hours of discovery in their efforts. To those who do not like to study history and to the very practical minded, the question is not as easy to answer. There is, however, much of practical value in studying the American Revolution in Georgia. Through such a study much can be learned about men and women—what makes them strong, how some fail, and how far they can be pushed or led. Much can also be learned about politics and social change. What kinds of political issues force men to fight and kill other men? How is it to some people a social change seems so long in coming while to others that very change appears too swift? Students of Georgia history can also learn about themselves and what it means to be a Georgian.

The purpose of this pamphlet is to help begin a study of the Revolution in Georgia. It is divided into two parts. The first part will outline briefly what Georgia may have been like geographically, socially, economically and politically two hundred years ago and the second part will trace some

Courtesy, Georgia Archives

of the events which paved the way to revolt.

Settlers Find Fair Land

Prior to the arrival of the first European settlers Georgia was home to tribes of roaming Indians, mainly Creeks and Cherokees. The land at that time may have been much like the sixteenth century explorer Jean Ribault described it in his visits to the Carolinas and Florida. He wrote that the country was the fairest and pleasantest of all the world, abounding in honey, venison and wildfowl. There were forests and woods of all sorts with palms, cypresses, cedars and bays. There were grape-laden vines that grew to the tops of oaks. The fair meadows were a pleasure to behold for they were full of herons, curlews, mallards, egrets and woodcocks, and the tracks of bucks, wild swine and other birds and animals.

By 1776 the settled part of Georgia was beginning to take on a different look, however. A map of Georgia before the Revolution would have revealed a pattern of towns and settlements that

resembled something like a huge backwards L. The tall part of the L stretched along the Savannah River north and west past Augusta, the point of the L was the town of Savannah, and the short leg of the L ran south down the Atlantic shore to the St. Mary's River. Along these two lines lived the people of Georgia in 1776. Most of these people lived on farms or plantations, although towns had developed at Savannah, Augusta, Sunbury, Ebenezer, Midway and Darien. The largest and oldest town in Georgia was Savannah, built on the site where the first English settlers landed in 1733. Savannah was Georgia's leading port and its colonial capital. In a visit to Savannah today, the streets and town plan used at the time of the Revolution are visible, and an imaginative visitor can recreate the atmosphere that must have characterized that town in the eighteenth century. Of course colonial Savannah was not as large and busy as that city or almost any Georgia city is today. There were only about four to five hundred houses and other buildings within easy walking distance of the Savannah River.

The land around Savannah and south along the Atlantic coast had large rice and indigo plantations. Lumber was cut in the pine, cypress and oak forests, and naval stores of turpentine and tar were processed. There were few people, however, living in this coastal area because the large tracts of swamp and marsh between the St. Mary's River and Savannah spaced the plantations apart from each other. Rice was one of the main crops raised in this coastal area and was unique in the way it was cultivated. Growing rice required a planter to drain and flood many acres of land. To do this he had to build a system of dikes and ditches to control the water. Such extensive preparation of the fields for the cultivation and harvesting of the rice required substantial investments of money and slaves. To maximize his profits, a planter wanted to have as much land as possible and some planters owned several thousand acres.

These coastal plantations were important to life in Georgia at the time. Their crops and lumber, exported to Europe to the West Indies and to the other colonies, were the mainstay of business activity in Georgia. These exports not only paid for what had to be purchased in other parts of the world, like hardware and linens, but also helped to provide a livelihood for the merchants, shippers and artisans who gathered to make Savannah a growing port and commercial center.

The second important area in eighteenth century Georgia was the land which stretched north and west of Savannah along the Savannah River to the town of Augusta. Roads were difficult to build and to maintain, and rivers like the Savannah were important as a means of travel. A journey up the Savannah River to Augusta would have found the traveler on the main thoroughfare of Georgia. Such a trip would have revealed a region quite different than that along the Atlantic. Through this area ran an imaginary and ever-moving line, marking the frontier, the region which divided the settled part of America from the area in which no permanent farms or settlements existed. It was the line that divided the settlers from the Indians.

Frontier Shapes Geography

The frontier was an important asset to Georgia which helped to shape the whole character of the colony. The vast amount of unsettled farm land and the mild winters attracted thousands of settlers from the other colonies and from Europe. As this area developed into a region of small farms, it became typical of the American frontier and helped to make Georgia a diversified colony. The settlement of this area in the late eighteenth century meant that Georgia was a colony not only of plantation dwellers and townspeople but also of subsistence farmers. By 1775, there were more small farmers than plantation dwellers in Georgia. With this kind of mix Georgia blended well with the other colonies to the north.

Courtesy, Emory University

This was the geographic picture of Georgia as it appeared before the Revolution. It was a young and vigorous colony with three distinct areas of activity—the coastal lands of large plantations, the region of small farms along the Savannah River and the vast unsettled land to the north and west. At the focal point was the prospering town of Savannah which served as the administrative and commercial center for the colony. Georgia's products included the rice, indigo, other agricultural commodities from the plantations and farms, deerskins, lumber and naval stores from the forests.

The population in Georgia in the eighteenth century was much like that of her neighboring colonies. Aside from Florida Georgia's population was the smallest and also the most recently settled of all those colonies along the Atlantic coast. No one knows exactly how many people lived in Georgia at the time, for no accurate census had ever been made and it was impossible to get a good count of the Indians. Historians have estimated that about 40,000 to 50,000 people other than Indians lived in Georgia in 1776. For an idea of the relative size of the population at that time, try to imagine that all the people who lived in Georgia in 1776 could sit in the Atlanta stadium today. Georgia's tiny population meant that the colony was not as strong commercially nor did it have the military potential of the others. This is a fact which should always be in mind when studying Georgia's role in the Revolution.

Besides being small the population was also relatively new in Georgia. English settlements in Virginia and farther north had existed for almost one hundred and twenty-five years before James Oglethorpe brought the first settlers to Georgia in 1733. The colony grew slowly at first and there were many reasons why the Europeans were slow to settle in Georgia. The most important was that early Georgia was the border land between English possessions toward the north and Spanish lands to the south. This problem was of particular concern to men who were looking for a place to live in the eighteenth century. These were the times when the great European countries jealously squabbled over their various colonies, and people were afraid to move to distant colonial lands that were located next to hostile neighbors. The fate of such border lands like Georgia was often uncertain.

Georgia's uncertainty ended in 1763. In that year England won the French and Indian War, and, as a prize, gained control of the entire eastern coast of North America from the tip of Florida to as far north as Europeans cared to live. After the signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1763, Georgia's southern boundary with Florida was safe. Thus, in the decade after 1763, the colony grew rapidly.

Settlers came from England and Germany, Scotland and Ireland. They came to Georgia for many reasons—some to escape political and religious persecution, some to find jobs and economic opportunity and some for adventure and idealism. The English settled throughout the colony and came from a variety of social and religious backgrounds. There were Anglicans, Baptists, Jews and many other religious groups represented among them. The Germans were Lutherans for the most part and settled around the town of Ebenezer and in Savannah. They were known as Salzburgers named so because of the town in Europe from which many

of their families had originated. The Scots were Presbyterians and found their home at Darien on the Altamaha River. The Irish were protestants from Northern Ireland and lived throughout the colony, mainly in the upcountry.

As the population expanded after 1763, people continued to come from Europe, but far larger numbers were coming to Georgia from the other colonies to the north. Many of these men saw Georgia as a land of great opportunity. Planters from South Carolina, for example, came to Georgia with the slaves necessary to make plantation agriculture productive. Many of these planters settled along the coast, became successful and as a result the slave population increased. Blacks came to Georgia from South Carolina, other American colonies, from English colonies in the Carribean and directly from Africa. By the time of the Revolution, it is estimated, about 15,000 to 18,000 blacks lived in Georgia, making up almost one-half of the total population.

The large numbers of white farmers who migrated into the interior of Georgia were mainly from the Carolinas and Virginia. They sought the opportunity that the inexpensive, available good land in Georgia offered. This migration from the other colonies to Georgia was of particular significance to the colony's history prior to the Revolution. These newcomers had been born Americans and had no particular ties or loyalties to England. As they settled Georgia in ever increasing numbers they brought with them the attitudes and ideas similar to those of relatives and friends they left in the north. This meant that when the Revolution came to America, many Georgians might be expected to react much like their fellow Americans in the other colonies.

Gentry Provide Leadership

In many ways, the social and economic picture of eighteenth century Georgia was similar to that of other colonies. Unlike England, Georgia had no hereditary class of dukes, lords or other nobles. Still there were gentlemen of wealth and distinction who were merchants and planters. In general a relatively small group of "gentlemen"—less than a hundred in all—provided the social and political leadership of the colony. This group did not always agree among themselves about the best course for Georgia, and some joined the movement for independence while others remained loyal to Britain. Such political differences developed within families, often between fathers and sons. Noble Jones, for example, was a loyal supporter of the king until his death in 1775 while his son, Noble Wimberly Jones, was a leader in the Revolution.

The bases of wealth for most of those colonial Georgians were agriculture, forest industries and trade. The rice plantations along the coast produced the greatest agricultural wealth, mainly rice, indigo and Indian corn. Frontier farms in the upcountry grew wheat, Indian corn, tobacco and a little hemp. From Darien on the coast to Augusta in the upcountry, large quantities of livestock, especially cattle and hogs, were pastured. In 1772, one of Georgia's largest export items was salt meat sold to West Indian planters for slave food.

Two of the richest men in the colony were Governor Wright, with eleven plantations totaling 24,578 acres and 523 slaves, and Lieutenant Governor John Graham, with over 26,000 acres and 450 slaves. In Savannah, James Habersham and the Telfairs, Edward and William, combined planting and mercantile activities to become wealthy. Near Augusta, George Galphin, an Indian trader, made a fortune out of dealing with Indians and local farmers, while Roger Kelsall did the same at Sunbury. These men were representative of Georgia's earliest aristocracy of well-to-do planters, merchants and traders.

Most of the plantations were located on the coastal islands or not more than twenty miles inland on the Savannah, Ogeechee and Altamaha rivers. By contrast, the upcountry was made up of small farms with few slaves where more emphasis

was placed upon growing crops for home consumption. In the coastal area along the streams, an extensive sawmilling industry grew up using live oak, cypress and pine trees. Lumber, shingles, pitch, tar and turpentine were the main products. Most were shipped to the West Indies.

Augusta, on the other hand, became the warehousing and market center for the southern Indian trade.

Life in upcountry Georgia often was hard in colonial days. Violence between settlers was always a threat and often became a reality. From 1763 to 1774 there were raids, outbreaks of fighting and plundering expeditions between red and white men. Frontier settlers resented the fact that the King's authorities in Savannah could not protect them, and frequently they took the law into their own hands. For his part, Governor Wright mistrusted some frontier settlers, calling them "the worst sort of people" and "crackers." The frontiersman soon developed a mistrust of official authority that carried over into the Revolution.

Except for household use, there was little manufacturing in colonial Georgia. A small amount of homespun cloth, a few cotton stockings, some crude plantation shoes, blacksmith products and a little furniture were all that these early Georgians made. Despite the abundance of good timber, few ships were built before 1775. The colony's rivers and coasts were dotted with small boats and ships hauling goods from one colony to another, from Nova Scotia to the West Indies. Trade was carried on with Charleston, the West Indies, New England, England and the middle colonies. To the West Indies went lumber and provisions, mostly shingles, staves, rice, corn, peas and barreled beef and pork. From there came sugar, rum and slaves. From Great Britain chiefly came hardware, linens and other manufactured goods. To Britain went deerskins, rice, indigo, silk and naval stores. Foodstuffs, especially fish from New England and flour from Pennsylvania, came from the northern colonies. In 1772 over two hundred ships sailed from Georgia's two ports, Savannah and Sunbury, and, as James Habersham insisted, the colony was well on its way toward becoming prosperous in the years just before the Revolution.

The common man in Georgia in the eighteenth century had a variety of callings. He might well have been an artisan or a farmer, a trader or shopkeeper. Divided attitudes about the Revolution could be found among them too, and some, like George Walton, emerged as political leaders after independence. The slaves formed a significant part of the population but had few political and social rights or privileges. As a result, they had little direct influence on the course of politics in the colony before the revolt.

Formal education as it is known today was rare among the colony's first settlers. Still, a great many knew how to read and write and some, like James Habersham, kept extensive libraries in their homes.

Courtesy, Emory University

Georgia's colonial government resembled that of the other royal colonies. The governor and a council were appointed from England. The legislature was composed of two houses, the Upper House of Assembly which was the governor's council and the Commons House of Assembly which was elected by residents who owned at least fifty acres of land. This was a liberal franchise by eighteenth century standards and most of the settlers owned farms large enough to qualify. The Commons House of Assembly consisted of about twenty-five delegates from over the colony. The governor had to approve all legislation before it became law. Other administrative officials were appointed and paid directly from England and were not dependent on the Assembly for salaries.

During the pre-Revolutionary period Georgia's royal governor was the able James Wright. He had studied law in London and resided in South Carolina. Prior to becoming Governor of Georgia, he had been an attorney general in South Carolina, that colony's agent to London and had experience as a lawyer and planter. With these qualifications he was a well-prepared colonial administrator who had a genuine interest in Georgia.

Socially, then, Georgia was much like the other southern American colonies. Merchants and planters generally provided leadership for the colony while artisans, shopkeepers and small farmers made up the bulk of the white population. There was a large slave population, located mainly in the tidewater region along the coast. Politically the colonists enjoyed a relatively enlightened representative government.

The end of the French and Indian War in 1763 opened a new chapter in Britain's relations with her American colonies and is a good place to begin a study of the Revolution in Georgia. The end of the war found Britain with a heavy debt and a large empire to protect. The government in London set in motion plans to raise money in the American colonies to help pay the expenses of the empire.

This effort to collect revenue in the colonies became an important source of conflict between Britain and America after 1763. The controversy grew and helped to ignite the revolt in the American colonies.

Protests Begin: The Sugar Act

Early in 1764 the British made the first move by enacting a law which among other things regulated the tax on various goods imported by the colonies. This tax was known as the Sugar Act and affected Georgia's lumber trade with the other colonies. When the plan was announced in Georgia, the Assembly voted to instruct the colony's agent in London to protest the Act. Other colonies also protested, and Massachusetts disclaimed the very idea that Parliament had the right to lay revenue taxes on the colonies without their consent.

The second effort by the British to raise revenue in America was the Stamp Act of 1765. In this act Britain required that special government stamps be purchased and used on almost all printed material in the colonies. This meant that every legal document, pamphlet and newspaper had to carry a government stamp for which a tax had been paid. Opposition to this act and to the principle of taxing the colonies without their consent developed almost everywhere. A meeting of delegates from all the colonies was planned by the Massachusetts Assembly and scheduled to meet in New York in September, 1765. Georgia was invited to send representatives and Alexander Wylly, the Speaker of the Commons House of Assembly, requested the Assembly to meet and select delegates for the New York meeting.

Wright Struggles For Order

Governor Wright opposed sending delegates and refused to call the Assembly into session to consider the matter. So Georgia sent no representative to the Stamp Act Congress in New York. By the end of October, however, the proceedings of the Congress were reported in Georgia along with the

news that South Carolina and other colonies objected to Georgia's lack of participation in the Congress. Organized opposition began to develop in Georgia to the Stamp Act. A stamp officer was hanged in effigy in Savannah October 31, the anniversary of King George's accession to the throne, and November 5, Guy Fawkes Day. Both of these dates were days of traditional celebration in the colonies. During these anti-Stamp Act activities a group known as the "Sons of Liberty" first appeared in Georgia. This organization was made up of men who were opposed to the Stamp Act and who were willing to use threats and violence in order to achieve their goals. They had contacts and sympathizers in similar organizations throughout the colonies. When the stamps finally arrived in Georgia at the end of the year, the Sons of Liberty attempted to destroy them.

Governor Wright was able to protect the stamps and the stamp agent, and even sold some of the stamps to merchants and shippers after the new year. But it soon became clear that the Governor was unable to control the growing opposition to the stamps, and he finally sent the stamps out of the colony. In the spring of 1766 the British Parliament repealed the Stamp Act, ending the quarrel over stamps.

The Stamp Act controversy showed that although there was militant opposition to the Act on the part of many Georgians, like the Sons of Liberty, there were also those who were willing to cooperate with the government, purchase stamps and try to get their grievances adjusted through petitions to the King and Parliament. A good example of this latter was the Reverend John J. Zubly, a Savannah minister. In a sermon after the Stamp Act had been repealed, Zubly expressed his sentiments about the controversy. He said he was happy at the repeal of the Stamp Act because he believed it had been a burden to Georgians, but he also felt strongly about obedience to Parliament and respect for the Crown. Zubly believed laws should be obeyed until changed. That, he felt, was the path to real liberty. There were many Georgians who agreed with Zubly.

More Taxes Renew Controversy

A period of relative calm developed between Britain and Georgia after the repeal of the Stamp Act and lasted until the fall of 1767 when news arrived of a new effort to tax imported goods. Known as the Townshend Acts, these duties were named after British Chancellor of the Exchequer, Charles Townshend, who planned the regulation which taxed certain imported items such as glass, paints, paper and tea. Again, other colonies took the lead in opposing the tax and the Massachusetts Assembly urged Georgia to join in the opposition. When the Georgia Assembly met in November, 1768, Governor Wright warned it not to waste time in opposing the new tax. After almost two months of routine work, however, the Assembly under the leadership of Speaker Alexander Wylly began discussing the letters which had been received from Massachusetts objecting to the Townshend duties. Governor Wright then dissolved the Assembly and put an end to official consideration of the tax.

Meanwhile a new technique of opposition to the Townshend taxes had developed in other colonies. Non-importation agreements had been formed in which merchants agreed not to import what they termed were "unconstitutionally" taxed British goods. This boycott of British products was an effort to force Britain to repeal the Townshend duties. In September, 1769, a group of Savannah merchants and others adopted a non-importation agreement for Georgia. The agreement did not work well, for no enforcement machinery was established to insure the boycott's effectiveness and many Georgians were opposed to the idea altogether. The trouble the British had with the Townshend Acts in other parts of the American colonies, particularly in the north, led to their repeal in April of 1770.

Government Branches Split

The years from 1770 to 1773 were relatively quiet ones in Georgia, marked only by quarrels between Governor Wright and the Commons House of Assembly. The first disagreement came over the extension of voting rights to four new parishes–St. David, St. Patrick, St. Thomas and St. Mary–which had been created between the Altamaha and the St. Marys Rivers. On November 15, 1769, the Commons House asked the governor to issue writ of election for these parishes so that they could elect delegates to the House. Wright refused, not because he did not believe the newly-settled areas had no right to be represented, but because he could not enlarge the Commons House without the King's permission. Wright's reasons angered the House, and it too decided to resort to legal technicalities. Using the argument of "No taxation without representation," the Commons House exempted the four southern parishes from the tax bill. The next year the Commons House refused to pass a tax bill and did other things which displeased the governor. Hence he dissolved the assembly. By 1771, the governor and the Commons House could not agree on the rights of the assembly, of the governor, of the people or of the British government.

These troubles between the governor and the Commons House grew worse. In April, 1771, the Commons House elected Noble Wimberly Jones as its speaker. Worried over Jones' history of resistance to British measures, Governor Wright disapproved his selection. In this Wright used a power given him by royal instructions but never before used in Georgia, and the Commons House resented his action. The house then elected Archibald Bulloch, as radical as Jones, to speaker, and thanked Jones for supporting the honor and dignity of the House and the rights and privileges of the people. Wright considered this action an insult to the Crown and dissolved the assembly. The fight between the governor and the assembly over the right to elect a speaker continued for nearly two years. Neither side secured a clear victory, but the whole dispute did serve to worsen relations between the governor and the assembly further.

Georgia was relatively quiet until the summer of 1774, when revolutionary activity erupted once more. As before, it was sparked by events taking place in other colonies. Although the British had repealed the Townshend Acts, they had retained the tax on tea as a symbol of the sovereignty of Parliament over the colonies. In a gesture of defiance to the tea tax some of the colonists in Boston staged the famous Boston Tea Party in December, 1773. This violence provoked the British to an unsuccessful, and as it developed, unwise effort to regain control of the Massachusetts Colony.

The British attempt to regain control of Massachusetts came in a series of laws passed March-June, 1774. Called the "Intolerable Acts" in America, these laws closed the port of Boston until the cost of the tea was paid, reorganized the government of Massachusetts and provided that American colonials could be taken to England for trial. Such measures were more frightening to Americans than a tax on tea. They responded by calling a general meeting of representatives from all the colonies to be held in Philadelphia to discuss "the present unhappy state of the colonies." Meeting in September, 1774, this group came to be known as the First Continental Congress. News of these activities in other colonies quickly reached Georgia and fired the radicals to bold action.

On July 27, 1774, four leaders of the radicals–Noble W. Jones, Archibald Bulloch, John Houstoun and George Walton–led a meeting at Peter Tondee's Tavern in Savannah to discuss what possible action could be taken by Georgians in the face of the new crisis. They decided that a meeting should be held the following August 10 with representatives invited from all twelve parishes in the colony. A committee was appointed to collect supplies to aid the colonists in Boston and another was established to correspond with patriots in the other colonies, but no action was taken on sending representatives to the First Continental Congress.

Meanwhile Governor Wright and many other Georgians, like Noble Jones and James Habersham, fought to keep the colony on a steady and loyal course. The Governor pointed out the impracticality of rebellion when the colony had no significant means to defend itself and counter-meetings were held by loyalists which denounced violent agitation against Britain. Sentiment was obviously still divided as to the best course for Georgia to follow in the problems which were sure to be ahead.

Radicals Gain Momentum

In January, 1775, the Georgia Assembly met again in Savannah. The Commons House passed resolutions condemning Britain for the current crisis; but, before a non-importation agreement could be passed or delegates could be appointed to the Second Continental Congress, the assembly was dissolved by Governor Wright. At the same time the assembly met, the radicals called a general meeting of their own in Savannah which they called the Provincial Congress. The first meeting of this group achieved little of substance because representatives from only four of the twelve parishes in the colony appeared. But the Provincial Congress was to be of long range significance because it was the beginning of the radicals' efforts to establish a government apart from the Colonial Assembly and the Governor. The Provincial Congress was destined to replace Governor Wright, the assembly, and all British officials within twelve months of its first meeting.

Pressure began to build both within and without Georgia for more decisive action by the colony in support of the American cause. The people in St. John's Parish, centered around the Midway area, were provoked by the apparent unwillingness of their fellow Georgians to take strong measures in support of the other colonies. These people were Puritans who had come to Georgia from Massachusetts by way of South Carolina and who now attempted to secede from Georgia and join South Carolina.

South Carolina refused them but commended their opposition to Britain and recommended one of their leaders, Lyman Hall, as a delegate to the Second Continental Congress. Hostile attitudes toward Georgia were beginning to develop among radicals in other colonies. In February, 1775, South Carolina forbade trade with Georgia because it had not joined the Continental Association, a trade boycott of Britain. The South Carolinians held that the Georgians were "unworthy of the rights of freemen." Such pressure was beginning to isolate Georgia from the other colonies.

On May 10, reports arrived in Savannah about the outbreak of fighting and bloodshed which had taken place between colonists and British soldiers at Lexington and Concord in Massachusetts. The news that Americans had been killed by the British brought new sympathizers to the radical cause. The Whigs, as the radicals now were called, grew in strength and determination. At the same time the pro-British Tories were finding their position more and more difficult because there seemed to be little support or leadership from Britain for those who favored the government.

Violence, Unrest Develop

The Whigs became bolder. The night after the news about Lexington and Concord arrived, the public powder magazine was raided. Twenty-one cannons were spiked in Savannah June 2, and during the Governor's celebration of the King's birthday on June 5, the Whigs erected a liberty pole in front of Tondee's Tavern and toasted American liberty. Later in the month military stores such as guns and shot were taken from the public storehouse at Savannah. It was clear that violence and unrest were rapidly developing in the colony.

The Whigs prepared for the election of a Second Provincial Congress which met in Savannah on July 4, 1775. This Congress voted to work closely with the Continental Congress and elected five delegates to represent Georgia in Philadelphia.

They were Archibald Bulloch, Lyman Hall, John Houstoun, Noble W. Jones and John J. Zubly. Georgia had now committed herself to the American cause. This Provincial Congress can be considered as Georgia's first revolutionary government. It was representative of almost all voting districts in the colony and claimed to meet in place of the Assembly. Before the Congress adjourned, several committees were appointed to provide continuity to the work of the Congress, advise the delegates in Philadelphia and keep Georgians informed of activities in the other colonies.

It soon became clear that Governor Wright and the other loyal officials no longer had control of any important government function in Georgia. The other royal officials who attempted to carry out their duties were either threatened by the radicals or ignored by the people. By August, 1775, the revolutionists had control of the port, the customs house, the militia and the court system in the colony. Governor Wright fled Georgia in Februar , 1776, and the spirit of moderation and conciliation which had long characterized the history of Georgia in the crises also disappeared. When Georgians agreed to the Declaration of Independence in July of 1776, they were locked into the American cause and the war that followed.

Why the Split?

There is no certain answer to the question of why the American Revolution occurred. Historians have pointed out that an American nation had developed in all but name by 1776. The three million and more people who lived in the thirteen colonies were similar in language and cultural background. They shared similar problems unique to colonial and frontier societies and had grown distant from England in social and economic ways before the Revolution began.

The political issue was also important. The quarrel between Britain and America began over minor changes in British colonial policy but broadened

Courtesy, Georgia Archives

into truly revolutionary issues concerning rights and liberties. Many thoughtful men in America in the eighteenth century believed that their basic political rights and liberties were being challenged, and to preserve these they were willing to risk rebellion and war.

The inability of men to cope consistently and effectively with complex problems contributed to the break between Britain and America also. Leaders in Britain lacked insight into the character of the Americans and the Americans often misinterpreted British motives and actions. These kinds of problems were made more complicated by the distance in time and miles between the two continents.

Georgia was part and parcel of this growing American nation in 1776 and was affected by the same forces which operated in the other colonies. Yet the colony moved slowly in committing herself to rebellion. This reluctance can be traced partly to the fact that Georgia was one of the youngest and smallest colonies and also to its long life as a frontier colony so close to the hostile Spanish and French. Georgia had been used to being more dependent upon Britain than the older colonies. Also Georgia's moderate and effective colonial leaders helped her to remain loyal. Governor James Wright, especially, was an able governor, generally respected by Georgians. He sought to keep Georgians loyal to Britain and was successful to a degree,

but his insistance upon always living up to his instructions from London antagonized people also.

Yet a majority of Georgians joined the revolution in the end. Perhaps the most important reason was that Georgians were Americans and were affected by the same things which affected other colonials. The colony's rapid growth in the last decade and a half and the fact that she had ceased being a frontier colony made her more likely to cast her lot with the other rebellious colonies from whence so many of her settlers had recently come. When Georgians joined with the other colonials to break their political ties with Britain, they set in motion a chain of revolutionary events which have affected world history ever since.

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Teacher's Guide

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The purpose of this teacher's guide is to help you make better use of the pamphlet *The Revolutionary Background in Georgia, 1763-1776.* Rather than follow a more formal approach of suggesting behavioral objectives and teaching strategies, this teacher's guide will recommend an informal approach.

While you may not wholeheartedly endorse this approach, you are urged to try it for this short unit. It will provide both your students and yourself with a change of pace. It will also provide you with an opportunity to individualize instruction if you have not been doing so.

This approach is based on the assumptions

- It is better to treat most texts as if they were encyclopedias rather than novels. This means that a class does not have to begin at page one and work its way through the text page by page.
- It is neither necessary nor desirable for all students to study the same content at the same pace.
- Students should be allowed to make some choices about what they will study and how they will study it. (In this case, they will all study the pamphlet, *The Revolutionary Background in Georgia.* However, within this setting they will be able to make some choices.)

Based on the pamphlet, this guide will suggest a range of activities organized around the author's topics. These activities can either be done individually or in small groups. The student reports that are often required as evidence of study can be either written or oral. The number of activities that each student will perform also can vary. These are your decisions to be made in accordance with your knowledge of the pupils and your purposes.

One possibility would be to set up learning contracts for this unit. Such a contract might look like this:

I, _____ (student's name), do hereby contract for the grade of _____ for the unit *The Revolutionary Background in Georgia.* I understand that the grade for this unit is based on the following criteria:

A = completion (to the teacher's satisfaction) of one activity from *each* of the sections in Part I, one additional activity in Part I, and one activity in Part II. (Six activities in all)

B = completion (to the teacher's satisfaction) of one activity from *each* of the sections in Part I and one activity from Part II. (Five activities in all)

C = completion (to the teacher's satisfaction) of one activity from three of the four sections of Part I and one activity from Part II. (Four activities in all)

D = completion (to the teacher's satisfaction) of one activity from two of the four sections of Part I and one activity from Part II. (Three activities in all)

_____ _____

Student's signature Teacher's signature

Activities for Part I

The Geography of the Pre-Revolutionary Georgia

1. Draw a map of Georgia and shade in the area that was populated in 1776, according to the author's description.

2. Geographically, describe the differences between the land of the coastal plantations and the land of the upcountry farmers. Why were the plantations located near the coast?

3. Georgia products during the colonial period included rice, indigo, lumber and naval stores. Pick two of these products that you know the least about and make a one-page report on each of them.

The Sociology of Pre-Revolutionary Georgia

1. Using the textbook, other resources and your imagination, try writing a two-page description of life in Savannah and life on the frontier. Perhaps you would want to describe these life styles through the eyes of a fictional character.

2. The author mentions that early settlers in Georgia came primarily from four countries—England, Germany, Scotland and Ireland. Select one of these countries and report on the early settlement of people from it—where they settled in Georgia and why they selected Georgia as a place to settle.

3. The primary religious backgrounds of early Georgians were Anglican (Episcopal), Baptist, Lutheran and Presbyterian. Select one of these denominations and prepare a report on its beliefs during the 1700's. Perhaps local ministers will help.

4. Leadership in pre-revolutionary Georgia came from the merchant-planter class. Is this still true in Georgia today? Explain your view and support it with examples of current leaders.

The Economics of Pre-Revolutionary Georgia

1. Find a description of life on a large plantation. Would you like to have been a plantation owner? Explain your answer. Then describe why you would not have wanted to be a slave on this plantation.

2. Which were most important to Georgia's economy, coastal plantations or upcountry farms? Support your point of view with as many arguments as you can.

3. Make a study of an early craft such as shoemaking, furnituremaking or tailoring. If someone in your community still performs such functions, interview him and report on the craft as it exists today.

Politics in Pre-Revolutionary Georgia

1. Draw a chart depicting the governmental structure of pre-revolutionary Georgia.

2. Evaluate James Wright and his abilities as a Governor of Georgia.

3. Supporters of the Revolution claimed that the colonial government was "undemocratic." Support or refute this charge.

4. Political subdivisions of Georgia are now called counties. In the 1700's they were called "parishes." What is a "parish" and why was this term used in early Georgia for political subdivisions?

Activities for Part II

1. Make a time-line showing the events that led to the Revolution.

2. Report on the Townshend Acts. What did they tax? What effect did these taxes have on the colonists? Could colonists live without imported goods?

3. The author implies that Georgia might have remained peaceful and loyal except for the violent reactions of and pressures from other colonies. List some statements by the author which illustrate this point of view. What do you think about this? Either support or refute this point of view.

Based on the above activities, a teacher can have students share what they have learned with other students through debates, role-playing, small group discussions, panels or individual reports. This can be an interesting way to individualize instruction in Georgia history.

BOOKLETS IN THIS SERIES

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Charles Downs, Tidewater Community College, Frederick, Virginia

The Stamp Act in Georgia, 1765-1766
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Military History, 1776-1782
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Kenneth Coleman, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia

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James B. O'Donnell, Marietta College, Ohio

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Alton Hornsby, Morehouse College, Atlanta, Georgia

Loyalism in Revolutionary Georgia
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Milton Ready, University of North Carolina, Asheville, North Carolina

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